THE

Dean of *RIPON*'s

SERMON

Before the

QUEEN,

July xxix. 1694.

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The Duty and Obligations of ſerving God.

A SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN,

AT

WHITE-HALL,

JULY xxix. 1694.

BY

Chriſtopher Wyvill, D.D.

And Dean of *RIPON.*

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JULY XXIX. 1694.

BY

Christopher Wyvill, D.D.

And Dean of York.

A SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN.

Joshua xxiv. 15.

And if it seem evil unto you, to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your Fathers served, that were on the other side of the Flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose Land ye dwell; but as [illegible] and my house, we will serve the Lord.

THESE are the Words of *Joshua*, which he spake to the Children of *Israel*, [illegible] (by the Providence and Blessing [illegible]) he had [illegible] in the Land of [illegible] [illegible] all the Tribes of *Israel* together [illegible]

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Preach'd before the

QUEEN.

Joſhua xxiv. 15.

And if it ſeem evil unto you, to ſerve the Lord, chooſe you this day whom you will ſerve, whether the gods which your Fathers ſerved, that were on the other ſide of the Flood, or the gods of the Amorites *in whoſe Land ye dwell; but as for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.*

THESE are the Words of *Joſhua*, which he ſpake to the Children of *Iſrael*, after (by the Providence and Bleſſing of God) he had ſetled them in the Land of Promiſe. He had gathered all the Tribes of *Iſrael* together at

Shechem, and called for the Elders of Iſrael, and for their Heads, and for their Judges, and for their Officers, and they preſented themſelves before God; and there did he recite unto them the Benefits which God had done unto them and to their Forefathers, the Wonders which he did in the Land of *Egypt*, and the fearful Things by the Red Sea; how he had preſerved them in the Wilderneſs, delivered them out of the hand of their Enemies, *given them a Land which they did not labour for, Cities which they built not, Vineyards and Oliveyards which they planted not:* And from thence he takes an occaſion to exhort them to fear the Lord, and to ſerve him in ſincerity and truth, *and to put away the gods which their Fathers ſerved on the other ſide the Flood, and in* Egypt, *and to ſerve the Lord only, the onely true God*; and then, ſaith he, in the Verſe of my Text, *If it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the Lord, chooſe you this day whom you will ſerve.*

By which manner of expreſſion, we muſt not conceive that it was his intention to leave it as an indifferent matter, whether they ſerved God or not, or thereby to free them from the Obligations they already lay under of ſerving the Lord only; but rather that it was his Deſign by theſe words, to try and to prove their Inclinations and Affections towards the Almighty, and to induce them

them by a wiſe and a deliberate Conſideration, to a Reſolution of ſerving the Lord only; and to bind them the more ſtrictly to his Service, as having of their own free will choſen him to be their God. The Service of God is a reaſonable Service; he would have men conſult their own Reaſon, and conſider what they do, and wiſely and ſeriouſly to make choice of him.

This it ſeems *Joſhua* himſelf had done, and by his own Example would excite the People to do the like; for he acquaints them with his own Choice and Reſolution upon the Matter: For *as for me* (ſaith he) *and my houſe we will ſerve the Lord*; and a brave and a noble Reſolution it was, that although all others by a baſe Rebellion ſhould Apoſtatiſe from God, although they ſhould chooſe them other Lords, and make to themſelves other Gods, whilſt others put themſelves under the ſubjection of wild Paſſions and vile Affections, ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures; yet he with his whole Family would ſerve the onely true God, the great Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth: And what was his Reſolution at that time ſhould be ours now; for we have the ſame God to ſerve that he had, and the ſame and yet far greater Motives to induce us to it.

And that which makes his Example the more remark-

remarkable, and the more inforcing is this, that he was a ſoveraign Prince and Commander in chief of all the Hoſts of *Iſrael*, and yet neither the Charms nor the Troubles, neither the Pleaſures nor the Cares, with which ſo high a Station is uſually attended, could keep him off from a vigorous proſecution of the great buſineſs of Religion, and of the true Service of God. And when ſuch as he, when Princes and noble Perſons, when rich and great Men make an open profeſſion of ſerving God, when they make it their choice and their delight, and their buſineſs, what an excitement and encouragement muſt it be to inferiour people to do the like?

And indeed the Duty of ſerving God is ſo juſt, and ſo reaſonable, the Obligations and Motives to it ſo many and ſo weighty, that if we ſeriouſly conſider the matter, it will appear to be the wiſeſt and the beſt choice that we can make.

In diſcourſing therefore upon this excellent Subject, I ſhall endeavour through God's aſſiſtance briefly to do theſe *Two* Things.

I. *To ſhew what it is to ſerve God; and*
II. *To ſhew what Obligations and Motives there are that can induce a man to reſolve ſo to do.*

And

And may that great and good God whom we ſerve, give ſuch a Bleſſing upon what I ſhall now ſay, as that his *Name* may be thereby glorified, and our ſelves advantaged!

I. Now then as for the *Firſt* of Theſe, *to ſerve God*, is not only to *profeſs God's true Religion*, but *to live according to it*, and to behave our ſelves in ſuch a courſe and way of living, whilſt we are in this World, as may evidence the ſenſe we have of the great Majeſty of God, and of his Soveraignty over us. This in general is the meaning of ſerving God as it is taken in the largeſt ſenſe, and in the full extent; for I ſhall not confine it to any one particular part of Piety, but look upon it as it takes in the whole compaſs of Religion; and that we may the better underſtand when we obſerve this Duty, and when we decline from it, I ſhall ſhew how we may ſerve God, in what things God may be ſerved by us, and what are the proper Qualifications of That Service.

(1.) *Firſt* then, We ſerve God by obeying his Commands, and by executing his Will and Pleaſure, in thoſe things which he requires of us. For Obedience to the Commands of God, is one great part, nay the firſt, the very chief and principal part of that Service which we owe him, and which

he, who is reſolved to ſerve God acceptably; muſt be ſure to mind; without This our Service of him is very lame and imperfect, or rather in truth nothing at all. There can be no better proof of Ser-
Rom. 6. 16. vice than Obedience; *Know ye not*, ſaith
Epheſ. 6. 5. St. *Paul*, *that to whom ye yield your ſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants you are whom you obey?* And it is his Advice, that *Servants ſhould be obedient to their Maſters*: and therefore if we would approve our ſelves the true Servants of God, we muſt heartily and ſincerely endeavour to obey all his Commands, whether they be againſt our preſent Inclinations and worldly Intereſt or not. With what chearfulneſs did the Servant of the *Centurion* in the Goſpel conform himſelf to the Commands of his Lord; who, if he did but ſay *Do this*, went inſtantly, without any more adoe, about it? And ſhould not we then teſtifie our Subjection to Almighty God, and make as full proof of our being his Servants, by yielding as great a deference to his Injunctions? With what readineſs do Men uſually obey the Commands of their Maſters, according to the Fleſh, even ſometimes in wicked and unrighteous Actions? And ſhould not we then as readily obey the Commands of the great Majeſty of Heaven, who commands us nothing but what is juſt and reaſonable; nothing but what tends

tends to our preſent and future Happineſs? If mortal and ſinful Men expect entire Obedience from their Dependants, upon the account only of their own bare Word; how much more reaſonably may the Eternal and Righteous God lay claim unto, and expect the like Obedience from all of us? If we pretend to be his Servants, Him we muſt obey without diſpute; the leaſt intimation of whoſe Commands (none of which can be any other than holy, and juſt and good) is a ſufficient Warrant for our immediate Compliance with them. And what thoſe Commands of his are, he hath ſo plainly, and ſo fully revealed and declared in the Holy Scriptures, that it muſt be our own fault if we are ignorant of them; but then we muſt withal remember what our Bleſſed Lord hath told us, That *he that knoweth his maſter's will, and doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* Luke 12. 47.

Now the Commands of God are ſuch as enjoyn ſome things to be done, or forbid us the doing of others; and if we would ſerve him as we ought do, we muſt have a ſpecial regard to all theſe; we muſt take care to perform all thoſe things which he poſitively commands, and decline from all thoſe things which he expreſly forbids; he commands us to be *holy as he is holy*, to be temperate

and chaſte, charitable and kind, upright and juſt in all our Dealings; and he forbids Intemperance and Luxury, Senſuality and Pride, and all kind of Uncharitableneſs and Injuſtice one to another. In a word, he commands us, *that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.* Tit. 2. 12. Theſe are the Divine Sanctions and Edicts which *are good and profitable unto men*, which tend to the Welfare and Happineſs of Mankind, and which He, our great Lord and Maſter, doth expect and require ſhould be obſerved and obeyed by us. And how then do they approve themſelves to be his Servants, that all along go contrary to theſe his juſt and equal Commands? How can they hope to enter into their Maſter's Joy? What can they expect hereafter, but that they ſhall be caſt, with all ſuch wicked and evil Servans, into That place of *utter darkneſs, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.*

(2.) *Secondly*, We may ſerve God, by promoting his Glory and Honour in the World, and by ſhewing, upon all occaſions, a zealous and a prudent regard for it. An honeſt and good Servant, that loves his Maſter, will be ready to do ſuch things as may tend to his Honour, and further his Credit; he will preſerve and ſupport his eſteem

eſteem ſo far as it is in his power, and endeavour to vindicate and aſſert it when he finds it is aſſaulted. No leſs ſhould the Servants of the Almighty God be concern'd for his Honour, yea rather much more, inaſmuch as his Honour is far to be preferred, and ought to be dearer unto us, than that of any mortal Man: and therefore if we be reſolved to ſerve God, and to approve our ſelves unto him his true and faithful Servants, we muſt make the Advancement and Preſervation of his Glory a great part of our care. We ſhould endeavour to promote his Glory and Honour in all Places, and among all Perſons we converſe with. To the doing of which we have ſeveral ways and means that may conduce very much, and we may meet with divers Occaſions and Opportunities for it, which, without great Blame to our ſelves, and wrong to God, we cannot paſs by, or let ſlip from us without their due Improvement. To this end,

We ſhould embrace and lay hold of, or rather, we ſhould look for and ſeek out all fit Times and proper Occaſions of ſpeaking honourably of him, publiſhing and declaring his noble Acts, and praiſing him with our lips, according to his excellent Greatneſs; extolling and magnifying his holy Name, for the great Works of Creation and Providence, for his admirable Wiſ-

dome,

dome, in contriving the Means of our Redemption; for his great Mercies and Bleſſings at any time conferred upon us; aſcribing all happy Events, and proſperous Succeſſes to his Goodneſs only, and rendring him all Praiſe and Glory for the ſame.

We ſhould teſtifie our Dependence upon him, and our Acknowledgment of his Dominion and Power, by entirely ſubmitting our ſelves to his bleſſed Will, humbly expreſſing our Content and Satisfaction with our Allowances and Proviſions, thoſe wages, which he, as our Maſter, affords us, as knowing him to be Lord of all; patiently alſo enduring all Afflictions and Croſſes, thoſe Corrections and Puniſhments which he ſhall think fit to inflict upon us, as knowing that they come from him; in all ſuch Caſes being ready to ſay with good old *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let him doe what ſeemeth him good*; or rather with our bleſſed Saviour, *not my will but thine be done.*

We ſhould uſe with eſpecial Reſpect all things peculiarly relating unto God; ſuch as are the Holy Scriptures, which deliver to us the Word of God; the Holy Sacraments, which convey to us the Grace of God; the Holy Places of God's Publick Worſhip, thoſe Places where his Honour dwelleth, together with whatever elſe is dedicated

ted and ſet apart for the peculiar Service of God. Theſe we ſhould never prophane, ſpeak ill of, or miſuſe; it doth not become thoſe who make profeſſion of *Serving God*, to uſe theſe things any otherwiſe than with very great Eſteem and Veneration, becauſe the Honour of God is very much concerned in the right, or ill Uſe of them.

And that we may be happy Inſtruments of glorifying *God*, and of cauſing him to be glorified and honoured by all Perſons, we ſhould heartily endeavour to promote the ſincere Practice of Piety and Religion in the World; for nothing can more naturally tend to *God*'s Glory than That. 'Tis the univerſal Practice of Piety, and the ſincere Profeſſion of *God*'s true Religion, that will make his Name venerable, and cauſe it to be bleſſed and reverenced among Men; when Men are eminently good and vertuous, regulating their Lives and Actions according to the Laws of *God*, they thereby make it manifeſt, That they reverence his Authority, which enacted them; that they admire his Wiſdome, which contrived them; that they dread his Juſtice, which can puniſh Men for the neglect of them. There is a kind of Luſtre and Brightneſs in the Works of Piety and Religion, done with a good Conſcience, and in Obedience to *God*'s Commands, which cannot but attract

tract the Eyes, and captivate the Hearts of all Beholders; which will make them clearly discern, and openly acknowledge the great Excellency, the awful Majesty, the admirable Wisdome of our Law-giver, will consequently induce them to magnifie and praise him. The Practice therefore of Piety and Religion, if we resolve to serve *God*, we should endeavour to advance and propagate, by the best and the wisest means that we can, by discountenancing Vice and Prophaneness, by encouraging Vertue and Holiness, by removing Mens Prejudices against it, by recommending it to the Minds of Men from its great Worth and Loveliness, its general Usefulness, its absolute Necessity, its solid Comfort and Peace, which it brings to the Souls and Consciences of Men: but chiefly by practising it our selves, and shewing a good Example; for the World is very much led and guided by Example; and when Men see others, especially their Betters and Superious, to be sincerely religious and good, Men fearing God, and serving him; they will be apt to endeavour to be so too.

Those Talents also with which God hath entrusted us, (our Wit, and Reason, and natural good Parts); and those temporal Blessings which he hath confer'd upon us, (our Wealth, our Honour,

nour, and Authority); we ſhould make uſe of and improve for the Advancement of God's Glory; in ſetting forth the Praiſes of God, in promoting Works of Charity, and doing good, in bringing Religion into Credit and Eſteem with Men.

And as we ſhould ſtudiouſly and induſtriouſly endeavour to promote the Glory of God our ſelves, ſo we ſhould expreſs our juſt Grief and Reſentment, when others do contrary unto it; and, ſo far as we can, we ſhould vindicate and aſſert it, and not patiently ſuffer the leaſt Affront done unto Him; otherwiſe we do but falſly uſurp the Title of his Servants, and become more like Deſerters of him.

Now by theſe ways and means we may eminently ſet forth God's Glory, procure many Proſelytes to him, and Worſhippers of him; and render his Religion, in the Eyes of all Men, very lovely and acceptable: in doing of which we do really and truly ſerve God, and God will accept of and own us for his Servants.

(3.) *Thirdly*, God may be ſerved by us, by our being diligent and faithful in our ſeveral Vocations and Employments. For the whole World is but, in a manner, one great Family, wherein God, the great Maſter of it, hath placed us all, ac-

cording to his good Pleaſure, aſſigning unto every one ſome particular Employment; and he that with Diligence, and Induſtry, and Faithfulneſs doth his Duty, in That ſtate of Life in which God hath placed him, doth therein ſerve God: and although ſome are placed in an higher Sphere, and made more capable of ſerving God than others are; yet all of us were deſign'd by our wiſe Maſter for ſome kind of work, though it be in an inferiour Order, that ſo no room ſhould be left for Idleneſs in the World; and though ſome have a nearer relation to God's Service than others, and, by reaſon of the nature of their Calling, are more uſually and properly honoured with the Title of *God's Servants*, (ſuch as are all *chief Rulers* and *Magiſtrates*, and the *Miniſters of God's Holy Word* and *Sacraments*, both which ſort of Perſons are emphatically called the *Servants of God*; thoſe in governing and protecting, theſe in teaching and inſtructing the People): yet every honeſt and lawful Employment doth give a Man a Title to That Honour too. And what Calling or Profeſſion ſoever a Man be of, whether it be honourable or ignoble in outward Appearance, yet if he do but proſecute his Buſineſs (provided that it be a lawful Buſineſs) induſtriouſly and diligently and faithfully, according to the Rules of Chriſtian

Chriſtian Prudence, with Sobriety and Moderation, he is even then about the *Service of God*, although he ſeems moſt buſie about his own Concerns. But,

(4.) *Fourthly*, The laſt thing which I ſhall mention, wherein God may be ſerved by us, is a Religious Worſhipping of him, which conſiſts in putting up our fervent Prayers to him, and hearty Praiſes of him; ſupplicating his Mercy and Grace, deprecating his Wrath and Vengeance, calling upon his Holy Name, and attentively reading or hearing his Holy Word; and that not only publickly, when we are in the Houſe of God, but privately alſo, when we are ſecluded from Company: and all this is to be done in the moſt humble and devout poſture; the bending of our Knees, the bowing of our Bodies, the lifting up of our Hands and Eyes, and the like; which are the moſt proper Acts whereof God's outward Worſhip doth conſiſt, and whereby we teſtifie our inward Acknowledgment of that Great and moſt Adorable Majeſty which we come to worſhip. The doing of all which, doth often of its ſelf bear the Name of *God's Service*; and indeed we cannot be truly ſaid to ſerve him, whilſt we wilfully neglect, or are very deficient in this Duty; and he that never, or perhaps but

ſeldom, doth thus worſhip the Lord his Maker, he that is ſo intent upon his worldly Concerns, as that he cannot, or will not allow himſelf ſome time for the Publick and Private Worſhip of God, doth not in truth *ſerve GOD*, but *Mammon*.

Now in theſe *Particulars* doth the Duty of *Serving God* chiefly conſiſt; which, that it may be the more acceptable unto him, ſhould be attended with ſuch Qualifications as theſe;

Firſt, With *Reverence*, for we ſhould continually carry about with us ſuch an awful Senſe and Apprehenſion of him, as to make us walk humbly with him; ſuch honourable and worthy Thoughts, as are ſuitable to the Eminency of his State, to his Divine Perfections, to all his wiſe Works and Actions; ſuch as are due unto, and befitting the Majeſty of ſo holy, ſo pure, and ſo glorious a God.

Secondly, With *Godly Fear*, not a ſervile or a ſlaviſh Fear, ſuch as the Devils and all wicked Men have (for in that reſpect we ſhould ſerve God without Fear) but a Fear which proceeds from a Love of him, and a Deſire to pleaſe him, ſuch a Fear as makes us dread nothing more than to offend and diſpleaſe him. And,

Laſtly, With *Gladneſs*, and *Chearfulneſs of heart*, for it doth not become the *Servants* of *God*, (the greateſt

greateſt and the beſt of Maſters, *whoſe Service is perfect Freedom*) to do his Buſineſs, and to go about his Work, with heavy and mournful Hearts, as if they ſerved a cruel and auſtere Maſter; but rather with all the Chearfulneſs and Alacrity that they can. And *God* himſelf, in ſeveral places in his Holy Word, hath exhorted us to *rejoice*, to *be glad*, to *delight our ſelves in him*, making it thereby ſufficiently evident, that to ſerve him with *Gladneſs* and *Chearfulneſs of Heart* is agreeable to his Will, ſo as that we may *ſerve God*, and *be chearful* too.

And thus having ſhewn what it is to ſerve God, wherein That Duty doth conſiſt, and what are the proper qualifications of it, I come now to

II. The *ſecond thing* which I propoſed to do, and that was, to ſhew *what thoſe obligations and motives are that may induce us to reſolve to ſerve him.*

(1.) And firſt I ſhall begin with That which *Joſhua* made uſe of as an Argument to engage the *Iſraelites* to the ſervice of God, and that is the conſideration of the goodneſs of God and of thoſe Bleſſings and benefits which we receive from him. And it is certainly a very enforcing Argument that carries weight, and ſtrength, and reaſon along with it. The conſideration of the Mercy, of the Favour,

of

of the goodneſs of God, muſt needs be accounted a great motive to do him ſervice, and cannot but be very prevalent with thoſe that have any ingenuity or ſenſe of gratitude in them. For who but he that is a ſtupid ungrateful Man, will kick and ſpurn at his beſt Friend, will refuſe to do him any ſervice, will not uſe his beſt endeavours to fulfil the will and pleaſure of ſuch a Benefactor as hath done him the greateſt Kindneſſes; and is ſtill able and ready to do him more?

Now the Benefits and Bleſſings which our moſt merciful God hath confer'd upon Mankind, are many and great. We owe our Life and our preſent Being to him; all this great and beautiful World, and all the Comforts and Conveniencies we enjoy in it, proceed ſolely from his Goodneſs. There is nothing that we have, which may be for the Pleaſure and Content, as well as for the Help and Support of Man, which comes not moſt liberally from him. We all live upon his Proviſions, and are ſuſtain'd by his Mercy, and preſerved by his Bounty. The air wherein we breathe, the ground whereon we tread, the comfortable influence of the Sun, the Moon and the Stars, all the Happineſs which we now have, or may hope for hereafter; all theſe are the Effects of his great love to us. Every where we meet with ſenſible demonſtrations

monſtrations of his Kindneſs, in every moment of our Lives we have great pledges of his Goodneſs towards us; nay (That which is the greateſt Endearment of all, and which aloud proclaims his Love and Favour to the Sons of Men) he hath given his only Son to die for us. And now what ſhall we *render unto the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto us?* He requires our Service, and we ſhall be vilely ungrateful if we yield it not unto him. Shall we repay all his Goodneſs with diſreſpect to him, or diſregard of him? ſhall we ſlight his Commands, and be diſobedient unto his Will, or turn our backs upon him, and refuſe to do him Service? If we thus requite the Lord, may we not be truly called in the Language of *Moſes*, *Fooliſh people and unwiſe?* O let us in the abundance of the Mercies we injoy look up to Almighty God the great Author of them; and let the repeated acts of his Goodneſs and Bounty prevail with us to do him Service! The Goodneſs of God extendeth it ſelf to all the Corners of the Earth, who diſpenſeth the temporal Bleſſings and Comforts of this Life (although not equally, yet) ſo univerſally and juſtly, as that he that has leaſt of them has enough to oblige him to ſerve God faithfully all the days of his Life. But then, as for thoſe that have a greater ſhare of the

Bleſſings

Bleſſings and Mercies of God, they that have an affluence of theſe Worldly goods, what an Engagement do they lie under to this duty? When God extendeth his bountiful hand in affording us an abundance of good things, ſo far as to add ſuperfluities to the neceſſities of nature; This lays ſtill a greater obligation upon us to do him ſervice. He therefore whom God hath raiſed to an higher degree in Wealth and Honour than other Men, is infinitely bound for the plentiful accommodations and comforts of his Life, to be more diligent and faithful in ſerving God, and to employ all the Advantages of his State to advance the Honour of his munificent Benefactour, to whoſe good Providence alone he doth owe them, from whoſe Goodneſs only he receives them.

But we ſhould not only conſider our own private Bleſſings, but thoſe alſo which God hath conferred on the Publick, obliging thereby every particular Member thereof to a dutiful Obſervance towards him; for we ſhould not be ſo narrow-ſpirited, as to reſpect only our own private Advantages, but ſhould withal regard thoſe of the Publick, of which every Man is a Part; and (if it be not through his own Demerit) may partake of the Happineſs and Proſperity of it. And among all the many Mercies, with which God

God hath bleſſed this Nation, certainly it ought not to be accounted one of the leaſt conſiderable, That at preſent we enjoy the great bleſſing of Peace amongſt our ſelves at home, although we are engaged in a juſt War with our Enemies abroad. And if we conſider that there are a great many who would willingly diſturb this our Peace, but through the good Providence of God are withheld from doing it, and that we are not expoſed to thoſe Miſeries and Devaſtations under which our Neighbouring Countries do groan, which are now made the Seat of the War; if we call to mind the many Providential and Wonderful Deliverances we have had from the reſtleſs but fruitleſs Endeavours of our Enemies to ſubvert and ruin us; In a word, if we reflect upon the happineſs we have, in enjoying the freedom of our Laws, together with all our juſt Rights and Privileges, whether we conſider the Mercies of the paſt, or of the preſent Age, we cannot but thankfully acknowledge, that the goodneſs of God hath been great towards us; and if the conſideration of theſe things cannot prevail with us to ſerve him in truth, and with all our hearts, how righteous a Controverſy with us hath, not only his Juſtice, but, his very Grace and Mercy?

(2.) But farther, we have another Obligation and a ſtrong Motive to ſerve God, ariſing from the

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conſideration of the Divine Perfections thoſe glorious Attributes which reſide in the Divine Nature, and whereby he hath been pleas'd to make himſelf known to us, the which do demand the Obſervance of this Duty from us, and are of themſelves perſwaſives ſufficient enough to excite Men to it, whether they receive good or evil at his hands. Although God ſhould not exert his goodneſs in conferring External Bleſſings upon us, although he ſhould withhold even good things from us, and inflict on us evils, as great as were thoſe of *Job*, yet he is infinitely worthy of all the ſervice that either Men or Angels can do unto him. His abſolute, and entire, and compleat Perfections, do indiſpenſably requíre it of us, and all that we can do in ſerving him, is but of right due unto him. For he is a God (and there is none elſe beſide him) of Infinite Majeſty, Power and Might, of Infinite Wiſdom, Juſtice and Mercy, Righteouſneſs and Truth. *He is That high and lofty one that inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe name is Holy*; He ruleth all things both in Heaven and Earth, and governs the World by an Infinite Wiſdom and Infinite Goodneſs; his Majeſty is ſo Wonderful, that the Angels themſelves in Preſence of it do hide their Faces, and the Devils for fear of it do ſhake and tremble. And what kind of perſons then are they, that in Contemplation of ſo Excellent and ſo Glorious a Being, can refuſe to ſerve him with their utmoſt Power? (3.) Be-

(3.) Beſides we ſhould conſider that we are obliged to this Duty by the Example of all the reſt of our Fellow-Creatures; who, if we ſhould be neglectful of it, or deficient in it, might all upbraid us for it. For do we not ſee, how all the Creatures of the World, all the Works of God, though never ſo much void of Senſe and Reaſon, do bear their parts in ſerving the Author of their Being; inaſmuch as they proſecute the deſign for which he made them? And if we Men, whom God hath endow'd with Reaſon and Judgment, whom he hath every way qualified and made fit for his Service; if we ſhould not have a ſhare in this high and moſt important Work, how juſtly might our Stupidity be reproved by their Subjection?

(4.) We ſhould alſo further conſider, what juſt Right and Title God Almighty hath to our beſt ſervices. We are or ſhould be his Servants by Right of Creation, for *He hath made us, and not we our ſelves*; by Right of Purchace and Redemption, for he hath bought us and redeemed us, not *with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, but with the precious Blood of Chriſt*; by Right of Conqueſt and Deliverance; for God, by ſending his Son to die for us, conquer'd *Sin*, and *Satan*, and *Hell*, and hath delivered us out of their Power and Rage; that *we, being delivered ſuch Enemies, might ſerve him without fear in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs before him all the days of our life.* He

therefore having ſuch and ſo great Right, and ſo many, and ſo ſtrong Titles to our Service, how can we with-hold it from him? If we are obliged to give *unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*, why ſhould we not give *unto God* what doth ſo juſtly belong unto him? In not doing of which we ſhall be unjuſt and ſacrilegious in the higheſt degree.

(5.) To this we may alſo add that it is an honourable thing to ſerve God, the beſt and the nobleſt Employment, That which is the proper work of reaſon, That wherein conſiſteth the greateſt Honour, and from whence doth redound the trueſt Glory that the Sons of Men can be capable of. 'Tis not a ſervice which we need be aſhamed of, or bluſh to own, or ſeek to decline, but rather ſuch as we have the greateſt reaſon in the World to be glad and proud of. 'Tis an Employment that ennobles Heaven, and wherein the Angels themſelves do rejoice and glory.

The wiſeſt and the beſt of Men, have all along eſteem'd it a great title of Honour to be ſtiled the Servants of God. St. *Paul* in his Epiſtle to *Titus* calls himſelf the *Servant of God*; and the Epiſtle of St. *James* begins thus, *James the ſervant of God*; and *Moſes* who was a great Prince, and a Ruler under God of all the Tribes of *Iſrael*, hath this honourable Character given of him (as alſo *Joſhua* his immediate

mediate Succeſſor had) *that he was the ſervant of the Lord*, and (that I may mention no more of this kind) *David* himſelf, who was an Anointed King, in many places of the Book of *Pſalms*, makes mention of his being the *ſervant of God*, as a matter wherein his greateſt Glory and Renown did conſiſt.

Indeed 'tis That which adds a Luſtre and a Glory to the Crowns of Princes, and makes them ſhine with the greater Brightneſs; 'tis That which advanceth the poor Man to an high Degree in the Love and Favour of God, and which adorns and beautifies the Soul, more than all the external Appendages of State and Grandeur, without it, can ſet off, or advantage the Body: 'tis That only which can make the rich Men truly honourable, and gain them the trueſt Eſteem and Veneration. *Them that honour me* (ſaith God) *I will honour, and they that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed.* To ſerve God, is to honour him; and they that do ſo ſhall be honour'd by him: not to ſerve God, is to deſpiſe him; and they that do ſo ſhall be rejected of him. Honour and Eſteem, both with God and Men, do conſtantly attend the Obſervance of this Duty; Diſreputation and *everlaſting Contempt* are the natural Conſequents of neglecting it.

Being therefore that all Men are naturally deſirous of Honour, being nothing can be a greater Honour to us, than to be employ'd in the Service of God,

God, why ſhould not this be one good Motive to induce a Man to reſolve to ſerve him?

(6.) And then we ſhould conſider farther, in the *laſt place*, that our State, in this World, is not of a very long continuance; our Life is upon the wing, and every moment haſting to its Period; every day that we live, we draw nearer to our End; and many Inſtances of Mortality we meet with, which may put us in mind of our Death. But then what will become of us in the other World, if our Life be not ſpent in the Service of God in this? We are ſure that we ſhall not be eternally extinct, like the Beaſts that periſh, we ſhall not ceaſe to have a Being, even when we are departed hence, but we ſhall aſſuredly live either in Eternal Miſery, or Eternal Happineſs; and there is no way for the avoiding the one or obtaining the other, than by ſerving God whilſt we are on this ſide the Grave. If we ſerve Sin, the wages we ſhall reap thereby (beſides the terrours of an afflicted Conſcience) will be Eternal Death, That will be our Miſery; *but if, being made free from ſin, we become the ſervants of God, we ſhall have our fruit unto holineſs, and, the end,* (beſides the comforts of a good Conſcience) *everlaſting life,* (Rom. 6. 22.) that will be our Happineſs and our everlaſting Reward. This whoſoever doth ſeriouſly conſider, he muſt be egregiouſly ſtupid and ſenſeleſs, if he prefers not the Service of God

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to all the vain Pleaſures and Enjoyments of the World, and chuſeth rather to ſerve him faithfully whilſt he lives here, than, by neglecting ſo to do, to run the hazard of being eternally miſerable hereafter. We know not how ſoon we may die, and go into another World; and we ſhall be very unwiſe, if we take not care that our portion may be amongſt the Bleſſed, even in thoſe happy Manſions above, where all the true Servants of God enjoy never-fading Felicity, and reap thoſe Pleaſures which are at God's right hand, and endure for evermore.

And thus, from theſe few Conſiderations (many more I might alledge, but from theſe few) we may ſufficiently diſcern what great Motives and Reaſons there are, that may perſwade us to this Duty of ſerving God. There may perhaps be ſuch unreaſonable Perſons, who, like thoſe in the Prophet *Malachi*, ſpeak againſt the Lord with *ſtout words*, and either ſay openly with their mouths, or think ſecretly in their hearts, that *it is in vain to ſerve God, and what profit* is it, *that we have kept his ordinances?* (Mal. 3. 13, 14.) or with thoſe wicked Men in *Job*, *What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him, and what profit ſhall we have if we pray unto him?* (Job 21. 14, 15.) But ah, miſerably deluded Men! how do they ſpeak? How do they think, without all Truth and Reaſon? For never any Man did truly ſerve God, who was not a great Gainer thereby, either in this World, or in the other,

other, which is far better. Wherefore whatever the ſentiments of wicked Men may be, whatever may befal us in the World upon This account, let us take up a firm Reſolution with *Joſhua*, and put That Reſolution into practice, *of ſerving, honouring, and obeying the Almighty Lord that made us.*

And that we may be the better enabled to ſerve him as we ought to do, it is very neceſſary that we ſhould daily have recourſe unto him for a continual ſupply of his Grace and Holy Spirit, which we are infallibly aſſured he will not deny to thoſe that humbly crave it of him, and we muſt for the ſake of our ever-bleſſed Redeemer, *Jeſus Chriſt*, beg God's Acceptance of our Perſons and our Endeavours. But then, when we have done all that we can in ſerving him, we muſt beware that we boaſt not of it, nor pride our ſelves upon that account, for we are ſtill but *unprofitable Servants*; and we muſt be ſo far from taking to our ſelves the praiſe of any thing that we do, that we ſhould give Praiſe and Glory to God only, who hath given ſuch power unto Men to ſerve and glorifie him.

Now unto The King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the only Wiſe God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

FINIS.